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NDTV FOUNDERS TO SELL MOST OF THEIR STAKE TO ADANI GROUP

Prannoy Roy and his wife Radhika said that they will sell 27.26% of their remaining 32.26% shareholding in NDTV to the Adani Group

DECISION AFTER 'MUTUAL AGREEMENT': ROYS

The development follows the Adani Group becoming the single largest shareholder in NDTV after first buying out a company backed by the founders and then acquiring more shares from the open market. "With mutual agreement we have decided to divest most of our shares in NDTV to (Adani Group firm) AMG Media Network," the Roys said in an exchange filing

ADANI'S STAKE IN NDTV TO GO UP TO 65%

- "Since the Open Offer was launched, our discussions with Mr Gautam Adani have been constructive; all the suggestions we made were accepted by him positively and with openness," added the statement, signed by the two founders
- With this, the Adani group's stake in NDTV will rise to 64.7% | P13

5%

THE ROYS WILL RETAIN A MINORITY SHAREHOLDING IN THE COMPANY

CHENNAI • MADURAI • VIJAYAWADA • BENGALURU • KOCHI • HYDERABAD • VISAKHAPATNAM • COIMBATORE • KOZHIKODE • THIRUVANANTHAPURAM • BELAGAVI • BHUBANESWAR • SHIVAMOGGA • MANGALURU • TIRUPATI • TIRUCHY • TIRUNELVELI • SAMBALPUR • HUBBALLI • DHARMAPURI • KOTTAYAM • KANNUR • VILLUPURAM • KOLLAM • TADEPALLIGUDEM • NAGAPATTINAM • THRISSUR • KALABURAGI

Festival gift as def pension revised from July 2019

MAYANK SINGH @ New Delhi

THE Union Cabinet on Friday approved revision of the 'One Rank One Pension' scheme for defence personnel and family pensioners with retrospective effect from July 1, 2019. The decision is expected to benefit over 25 lakh pensioners.

"The additional pension to defence personnel and family pensioners will entail an additional annual expenditure of ₹8,450 crore," Information and Broadcasting Minister Anurag Thakur told reporters at a briefing in New Delhi on Friday.

He said the decision will lead to enhanced pension according to the OROP proposal.

In a detailed statement, the defence ministry said, "Pension of the past pensioners would be re-fixed on the basis of average of minimum and maximum pension of Defence Forces retirees of calendar year 2018 in the same rank with the same length of service."

It added that the pension for those drawing above the average shall be protected. The benefit would also be extended to family pensioners, including war widows and disabled pensioners.

It added that ₹23,638 crore will be paid as arrears to the pensioners from July 2019 to June 2022. Arrears will be paid in four half-yearly instalments. However, all family pensioners, including those in receipt of special/liberalised family pension and gallantry award winners, shall be paid arrears in one instalment.

It said the arrears from July 1, 2019 to December 31, 2021 have been calculated as over ₹19,316 crore based on dearness allowance of 17% for the period from July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2021 and 31% DA for the period from July 1, 2021 to December 31, 2021. Arrears from July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2022 have been calculated at ₹23,638 crore as per the applicable dearness relief. This expenditure is over and above the ongoing expenditure on account of OROP. Veterans welcomed the decision.

Rank-wise likely estimated increase (in ₹) in service pension under OROP w.e.f. July 1, 2019

Rank	Pension as on 01.01.2016	Revised pension w.e.f. 01.07.2019	Revised pension w.e.f. 01.07.2021	Likely arrears from 01.07.2019 to 30.06.2022
Sepoy	17,699	19,726	20,394	87,000
Naik	18,427	21,101	21,930	1,14,000
Havildar	20,066	21,782	22,294	70,000
Nb Subedar	24,232	26,800	27,597	1,08,000
Sub Major	33,526	37,600	38,863	1,75,000
Major	61,205	68,550	70,827	3,05,000
Lt. Colonel	84,330	95,400	98,832	4,55,000
Colonel	92,855	1,03,700	1,07,062	4,42,000
Brigadier	96,555	1,08,800	1,12,596	5,05,000
Major Gen	99,621	1,09,100	1,12,039	3,90,000
L. Gen	1,01,515	1,12,050	1,15,316	4,32,000

Free grains for one year

The Cabinet also approved a proposal to provide free foodgrains to 81.35 crore people for one year under the National Food Security Act at a cost of ₹2 lakh crore. Currently, the beneficiaries have to pay ₹1-3 per kg

16 soldiers killed in road accident

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Guwahati

SIXTEEN Indian Army soldiers were killed on Thursday when a vehicle they were travelling in skidded down a steep slope in Sikkim.

The victims included three Junior Commissioned Officers and 13 soldiers, a defence statement said.

"In a tragic road accident, involving an Army Truck on 23 December 2022 at Zema, North Sikkim, sixteen Bravehearts of the Indian Army have lost their lives. The ill-fated vehicle was part of a three-vehicle convoy that had moved from Chatten in the morning towards Thangu. Enroute at Zema, the vehicle skidded down a steep slope while negotiating a sharp turn," the statement said.

A rescue mission was immediately launched and four injured soldiers were air-evacuated Military Hospital in Siliguri.

"Indian Army stands firm with the bereaved families at this hour of loss," the statement added.

In his condolence message, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said, "Pained by the loss of lives of our brave army personnel due to a road mishap in Sikkim. Condolences to the bereaved families. May the injured recover soon."

Flutter over minister's Ram Setu response

RAJESH KUMAR THAKUR
@ New Delhi

REPORTS on Union minister Jitendra Singh's reply in the Rajya Sabha to a question from BJP-supported Independent member Kartikeya Sharma over the Ram Setu structure, stirred up a hornet's nest in political circles on Friday.

Singh, while replying to Sharma's question on Thursday said: "What I am trying to say in a single statement is that it is difficult to actually pinpoint the exact structure that existed there, but there is some kind of an indication, direct or indirect, that those structures have existed."

But in a section of the media, it was spun as the Centre saying there is no conclusive proof on the Ram Setu.

What the minister actually said on the Ram Setu was, "we have some certain limitations as the history dates back to 18,000 years and that bridge, if we go by the history, was 56 km long. But yes, to some extent, we have been able to discover pieces and islands and some limestone shoals, which, of course, can't be accurately said to be remnants or parts of a bridge. But they have a certain amount of continuity in the location through which some surmises can be drawn."

Congress leader Pawan Khera sought to stir the pot, tweeting: "All devotees, listen with open ears and see with open eyes. The Modi government is saying in Parliament that there is no conclusive proof of the existence of Ram Setu."

Sources in the BJP said the distorted report had badly hurt the sentiments of crores of Hindus who believe the Ram Setu was built by 10 million of *vanaras* (monkeys) in five days to enable Ram cross the sea into Lanka to rescue Sita from Ravan's captivity. P9

Franchises find crore-strength

With their power-hitting and recent success in the T20 World Cup, English players seem to be the flavour of this season's Indian Premier League. England's bowling all-rounder Sam Curran became the costliest player in the history of the IPL when Punjab Kings dished out ₹18.5 crore at the auction on Friday. Here are the highlights

The rich list

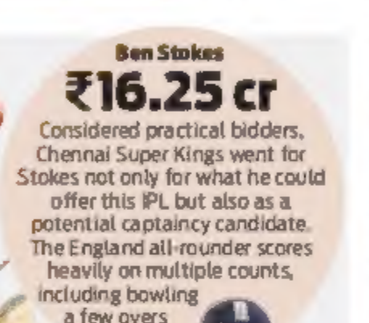
Sam Curran
₹18.5 cr
Punjab Kings will be hoping Sam's miserly death bowling and his ability to hit big will be ever-present in this IPL. This year's T20 WC star will return to familiar conditions as he made his IPL debut with the franchise in 2019

Max spend
₹35.70 cr
Sunrisers Hyderabad

TOP INDIANS
CAPPED
Mayank Agarwal ₹8.25 cr (Sunrisers)
UNCAPPED
Shivam Mavi ₹6 cr (Gujarat Titans)
TOTAL PLAYERS SOLD
80 (Overseas 29)

Cameron Green
₹17.5 cr
The young Australian star is considered one of the most lethal impact players with the ability to change the complexion of the game with his power-hitting. Mumbai Indian needed someone like him and did all it could to secure his services

Ben Stokes
₹16.25 cr
Considered practical bidders, Chennai Super Kings went for Stokes not only for what he could offer this IPL but also as a potential captaincy candidate. The England all-rounder scores heavily on multiple counts, including bowling a few overs



Nicholas Pooran ₹16 cr — Despite his talent, the West Indies wicketkeeper-batter has not been exceptional in the past few IPLs. His final price was the biggest surprise

Harry Brook ₹13.25 cr — Considered England's next superstar, Harry Brook went for an incredible price. Hyderabad went for the 23-year-old for his ability to bat and score fast

Pax from hotspot nations need Covid negative report

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ New Delhi

STARTING next week, India will make Covid-19 negative reports mandatory for international arrivals from countries reporting a spike in cases so as to further minimise ingress of any new variant of the bug into the country.

"In the next one week, selected countries will be identified where the caseload is higher," Union health minister Mansukh Mandaviya said in a TV interview on Friday. "People from there who come to India will have to upload their Covid-19 RTPCR reports," he added.

Countries reporting a surge in Covid-19 cases include China, the US, Japan, Korea, France, Greece and Italy.

On Thursday, the health ministry had announced new travel guidelines for international arrivals, which included 2% random Covid tests of passengers from hotspot countries. A day later, the ministry advised states to be alert in view of the upcoming Christmas and New Year festivities and directed them to strengthen surveillance, ramp up testing, and ensure the wearing of masks, especially in crowded spaces, including indoors.

Mandaviya held a Covid review meeting with state health ministers and asked them to ensure hospital infrastructure is ready to meet any eventuality. He directed them to carry out mock drills in hospitals to check their preparedness.

"Need to collectively reinvigorate the system and remove any sense of complacency and fatigue," he said and requested them to expedite testing. P9

People shop at the crowded Sarojini Nagar Market ahead of Christmas, in New Delhi on Friday. Just a couple of them are seen with masks on | PARVEEN KUMAR

K'taka pvt hosps to buy small sets of nasal vax

With the Centre approving the Bharat Biotech's nasal vaccine, INCOVACC on Friday, Prasanna HM, president, Private Hospitals and Nursing Home Association, said all private hospitals in the state will procure the vaccines in small batches to reduce wastage. P3

Covid scare looms over Sahitya Sammelana

There is now a shadow of Covid-19 over the Kannada Sahitya Sammelana, the annual Kannada literary event, that has been postponed five times this year. As per already-announced schedule, it is to be held for three days from January 6, 2023 in Haveri. P5

EXPRESS READ

Journo Siddique Kappan gets bail in money laundering case

Lucknow: The Allahabad HC granted bail to journalist Siddique Kappan in a money laundering case on Friday. Kappan was arrested two years ago on his way to cover the Hathras incident in Uttar Pradesh | P9

ICICI Bank ex-CEO-MD Chanda Kochhar, husband in CBI net

New Delhi: The CBI on Friday arrested ICICI Bank ex-CEO and MD Chanda Kochhar and her husband Deepak Kochhar over alleged cheating and irregularities in loans sanctioned to Videocon firms, officials said | P13

Vokkaliga leaders meet CM, demand quota hike

NAUSHAD BIJAPUR @ Belagavi

EVEN as the government is under pressure over the issue of including Panchamsalis into 2A reservation category, a delegation of Vokkaligas, comprising several top leaders of the BJP, met CM Basavaraj Bommai in Belagavi on Friday, demanding an increase in reservation for Vokkaligas.

The delegation of Vokkaligas who met the CM comprised Ministers R Ashoka, CN Ashwath Narayan, Araga Jnanendra, K Gopalaiah, ST Somashekhar, Dr K Sudhakar, Dr Narayanagouda and some MLAs from the community. After the meeting, Ashoka told the media that the community forms 16 per cent of the total population in the state. "The government should increase the quantum of reservation for Vokkaligas from 4 to 12 per cent and include sub-sects of the community, like Bunts, Reddys and Kunchitagas, under the OBC category," he said.

The government is not only finding itself trapped between the two dominant communities, but also faces the challenge of more communities raising their pitch demanding quota. Bommai said that a report on reservations to various communities has already been sent to the Backward Classes Commission and the government will take steps once the commission revises the report. P4

Fresh to home
No Chemicals
No Preservatives
Only Great Offers
MEGA MEAT FRESHTIVAL
5th-18th Dec
Mathi/Sardine
₹1
(Cleaned)
280g to 300g
Minimum Order: ₹599
CODE: 599MAT
Chicken (Curry Cut) + Seer Fish/ Surmai Steaks
₹475
Goat (Curry Cut) + Chicken (Curry Cut) + Prawns (Small, Cleaned)
Code: 599GCP
₹599
Sourced from dedicated farmers and fishermen | No Antibiotic Residue | No Preservatives*
Freshtohome
90 Minute Delivery
#NoShortcuts
We deliver in | Mangalore | Mysore
*No Class B preservatives in Ready-To-Cook. *T&C Apply. All prices are inclusive of taxes, except Ready To Cook. Offer is valid only for today and till stocks last. Images are for creative visualisation only. FreshToHome is only a brand name or trade mark and does not represent its true nature.

SERPENT'S WAYS?

Deported Charles will go back to crime: Supercop

BALA CHAUHAN @ Bengaluru

"HELLO Charles!" "Charles? Who? Are you crazy? I am not Charles." "You remember I had arrested you in 1971. Your game is up, Charles!" These are the famous lines that could turn a crime thriller into a box office hit. Fifteen minutes after Charles Sobhraj - the international criminal - walked into the O'Coqueiro restaurant in Porvorim at 10.30 pm on April 6, 1986, his game was up. His nemesis, the then senior police inspector, Agripada police station, Mumbai, Madhukar Zende had pinned him down and tied him. His men, in mufti, by then had emptied Charles' revolver. The police recovered $10,000 bills from Charles' shoes.

"I told the constables in the escort team to not move out of the vehicle or allow Charles to step out even to attend nature's call. I had given two empty tins to them for the purpose. They were to take the crook to Mumbai where a special aircraft was sent by the Delhi police to take him to Delhi," reminisced Zende, now 85, and settled in Singapore.

Madhukar Zende & Charles Sobhraj

This was the second time that Zende had arrested Sobhraj after November 1971, when the latter had planned to execute a heist at the Air India cash counter office in the New India Assurance building near Flora Fountain in Mumbai. On a tip-off from a petty thief Ajay Parekh, Zende, who was then an inspector at Gamdevi police station, Mumbai, had arrested him. "Charles had checked in at the Taj Hotel and his five to six accomplices in different hotels. They had planned to rob the AI cash counter office, when I arrested him near the Taj Hotel on November 11, 1971. We recovered receipts of the hotels where his accomplices were lodged, arrested them and recovered a lot of weapons," said the retired supercop. P10